

ICS 98

Papers relating to the achievement of independence by St Kitts-Nevis

SUMMARY GUIDE

Repository	GB 101 Institute of Commonwealth Studies
Reference code	ICS 98
Dates of creation of material	1982-1983
Level of description	Collection
Extent	3 files
Name of creator	Accumulated by Chris Birch from various sources

Administrative history

St Kitts-Nevis comprises the islands of St Kitts or St Christopher, in 1623 the first West Indian island to be settled by the British, and Nevis which was colonised in 1628. The two islands, together with Anguilla were united in 1882, and became an independent state in association with the United Kingdom in 1967. There were objections by Anguilla to the administration, which it considered to be dominated by St Kitts, and independence was declared by Anguilla later that year. Negotiations to resolve the dispute failed, and after being placed directly under British control in 1971, Anguilla was granted its own constitution in 1975 and union with St Kitts and Nevis formally severed in 1980.

There was a Constitutional Conference in London in 1982 to discuss the independence of St Kitts and Nevis. Despite disagreements over special provisions for Nevis in the proposed constitution, the independence process continued and was formally achieved on 19 September 1983. The objections came principally from the Labour Opposition, which until recently had dominated the administration and was still the largest party. Since 1980, however, the Government had consisted of a coalition of the People's Action Movement and Nevis's Reform Party, which held the balance of power and which the Opposition felt was instrumental in achieving Nevis's strong position in the new constitution.

Archival history

The papers were accumulated and donated to ICS by Chris Birch, a West Indian journalist born in St Kitts, and nephew of Professor Bryan King, to whom a number of the papers concerning objections to the proposed constitution relate.

Scope and content

Documents relating to the achievement of independence by St Kitts-Nevis in 1983, including papers concerning objections to the proposed form of the new Government;

official proceedings of a Constitutional Conference and of the UK Parliament to grant independence; and copies of newspapers and bulletins

System of arrangement

The papers are grouped into three sections according to the type of document

Access	Open
Copyright/copying conditions	Usual conditions apply
Language	English
Finding aids	A descriptive list is available in ICS Library
Date of description	22 September 2000

DESCRIPTIVE LIST

ICS 98/1	Official publications relating to independence	1982-1983
ICS 98/1/1	Report of the Saint Christopher and Nevis Constitutional Conference, London, December 1982, published by HMSO	1983
ICS 98/1/2	Draft Statutory Instrument for the termination of association of Saint Christopher and Nevis with the United Kingdom	1983
ICS 98/1/3	Copy of Parliamentary Debates (Hansard) for the House of Commons, covering the approval of the Saint Christopher and Nevis Termination of Association Order 1983	6 May 1983
ICS 98/1/4	Copies of Parliamentary Debates (Hansard) for the House of Lords, covering the approval of the Saint Christopher and Nevis Termination of Association Order 1983	9 May 1983
ICS 98/2	Papers concerning objections to the proposed constitution	1982-1983
ICS 98/2/1	Green Paper on the constitutional development of St Kitts and Nevis, published by the St Kitts Nevis Anguilla Labour Party (Workers League) Outlines the background to the Labour Party's objections to the proposed constitution, and sets out its own proposals, essentially that each island should be autonomous	2 Aug 1982
ICS 98/2/2-4	Leaflets and cutting of satirical verses by Bryan King regarding the proposed constitution	c.1982

ICS 98/2/5	Draft letter from Bryan King to Lord Pitt, outlining his objections to the proposed constitution	6 Jan 1983
ICS 98/2/6	Copy of letter from Cranley Onslow, Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and chair of the Constitutional Conference on St Christopher and Nevis, to Stan Newens MP, regarding provisions in the constitution for the autonomy of Nevis and its power to secede from the independent state, pointing out that a two-thirds majority and a referendum would be required for secession to be achieved, and that it is for the people of St Christopher and Nevis to develop their future after independence	2 Mar 1983
ICS 98/2/7	Copy of letter from Bryan King to the Editor of the 'Labour Spokesman', concerning the proposed constitution	16 Mar 1983
ICS 98/2/8-10	Drafts and copy of a petition by Bryan King to the Queen, for changes to the proposed constitution before independence is granted	[1983]
ICS 98/2/11	Copy of a letter from Chris Birch, written on behalf of his uncle Bryan King and sent to various members of the House of Lords, seeking their support in amending the constitutional proposals before independence is granted	3 May 1983
ICS 98/3	Newspapers, bulletins and articles relating to the achievement of independence	
ICS 98/3/1	'Independence Update', printed bulletin regarding the progress and celebration of independence	28 May 1983
ICS 98/3/2	'Independence Update', as ICS 98/3/1	30 Jul 1983
ICS 98/3/3	'The Labour Spokesman', newspaper published by the St Kitts Nevis Trades and Labour Union, including article on the detention of Patrick Roland John, former Prime Minister of Dominica and others; and editorial questioning the integrity of the Prime Minister of St Kitts-Nevis, Dr Kennedy Simmonds and his party, the People's Action Movement	17 Jun 1981
ICS 98/3/4	'The Labour Spokesman', containing article on the intention to have elections in Nevis before independence, and editorial on the debate in the House of Assembly on independence, and on the proposed constitution	19 Mar 1983
ICS 98/3/5	'The Labour Spokesman', containing article on Nevis elections	17 Aug 1983

ICS 98/3/6	'The Labour Spokesman', containing articles critical of the Simmonds Government, and Nevis election notices	20 Aug 1983
ICS 98/3/7	'The Democrat', newspaper including articles on the coming independence celebrations	13 Aug 1983
ICS 98/3/8	'The Democrat', including articles on independence	20 Aug 1983
ICS 98/3/9	Typescript copy of article by Chris Birch on the independence celebrations and the background to independence	n.d. [1983]
ICS 98/3/10-11	Copies of articles from the 'Times' on St Kitts-Nevis independence	Sep 1983